

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, July 25, 1791, from
Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe Correspondence,
Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W. Gawalt,
Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson

Wmsburg, July 25, 1791

Dear Sir,

Your favor of the 10th found me here upon the business mention'd in my last. I left Mrs. M. at Monticello to remain till my return. I have been here near three weeks, shall leave it tomrrow on my way back. We have gone thro' the business, allotted to each his duty and are to meet again in Fredbg. On the 1st of Octr. next. A part of our duty was to consolidate (when many were drawn) all the Acts on one subject-the object, to make the alw more perspicuous, by drawing its scatter'd parts into onve view & repealing all preceeding laws on such subject. A question arose in the Committe whether they were bound by this to prepare a bill conformable to the law as it stands, or provided they confin'd themselves to the subject, might propose on it any new project they thought fit. Of the latter opinion were Tazewell, Tucker & Lee, Prentis, Nelson & myself of the former. We were willing however that any member who conceiv'd the policy defective might propose a bill for the purpose of amending it, wh. (having the approbation of the Committee) , might accompany the other, with the preference of the board, thus giving the legislature a fair alternative between them. In point of importance & labor the business is pretty equally divided between the members, but how these gent. above referr'd to, particularly Tucker & Lee, will execute their part in this respect is doubtful; we shall observe the principle contended for on our part strictly. An attempt was made to protract our meeting untill that of the Assembly, to

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have it likewise at Richmond, with a view by management of procuring admission into the house for the purpose of supporting the report. This has been urg'd by most of them and

altho the time of meeting has been yielded, yet the other object is not abandon'd. It is sought no doubt with other views by several than merely that of explaining the bills that will be submitted. Some of them certainly wish to avail themselves of such an opportunity of gaining the good wishes of that body for other purposes. The context of Burke & Paine, as reviv'd in America with the different publications on either side is much the subject of discussion in all parts of this State. Adams is universally believ'd to be the author of Publicola & the principles he avows, as well as those of Mr. B as universally reprobated. The character of the public officers is likewise pretty well known. At first it was doubted whether you wou'd. not be compell'd to give your sentiments fully to the publick, whether a respect for yourself & the publick opinion wou'd. not require it of you. Whilst the fever was at the highest the opinion preponderated in favor of it. At present it appears unsettled, especially as Adams is not the avow'd author of Publicola, and so many writers have taken up the subject in your favor. Your other engagements wh. employ so much of yr. time necessarily, are certainly to be taken into the calculation & must have great weight. The publick opinion however will before long fully disclose itself on the subject of government, and as an opportunity has & is in some measure offer'd you to give the aid of yr. talents & character to the republican scale, I am aware you must have experienc'd some pain in repressing yr. inclinations on the subject. Your sentiments indeed, if they had been previously question'd, are made known as well by the short note prefix'd to Paines pamphlet, as a vol. Cod. do it. Dr. Lee is almost

the only man I have heard censure that pamphlet: or support that of his antagonist. Tis said however that his whole family are in harmony with him.

I am particularly thankful for yr. attention to our accommodation. We shall be happy in whatever you do in that respect & the more so as the nearer you place us to yr. self.

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Remember me to Mr. Madison. We are on our plantatn. surrounded by trees &c. Very affecty. I am dear Sir, sincerely yr. friend & servant

Jas.. Monroe

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